THE COMMONWEAL

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MR. FROST'S RECESSIONAL

THE poet has told us that "there is a budding morrow in midnight." It is not so comforting a thought that there may also be a budding midnight at noon. No one who went about among his fellows during the marvelous week when it might be said the attention of America was centered upon a single altar in a single city, could fail to be conscious that here and there a sentiment existed which could be trusted, at the fitting time and place, to write its own recessional upon the Eucharistic Congress.

The reasons for this were to be looked for not so much in American human nature as in human nature itself. The protestant spirit (using the word in its strictest etymological sense) exists in every community. Indeed, it would not be too much to say that, upon occasions, something of the protestant exists in every human heart. It is a strangely compounded affair, made up partly of a curiosity, not altogether ungenerous, to hear what may be said upon the other side: partly of a resentment, rooted in the ego, when a communal feeling has for the moment reduced the significance of the individual. It is the instinct that makes a man resist the pressure of a crowd, even when that pressure is carrying him in the direction where he is most anxious to be carried. It is the feeling that brings a grudging assent, even to propositions in whose success he is most interested, from the man whose opinion has not been asked.

Naturally, reasons so intimate and on the whole so little flattering, are not the ones that we shall find given when the season of dissent and mistrust arrives. An article in the current number of The Forum, from the pen of Mr. Stanley Frost, is a fair type of the form criticism is likely to take when a resentment intimately felt is forced to seek plausible and reasonable theses to make its argument palatable to a public which, on the whole, has lost its taste for religious invective.

For the most part, Mr. Frost's article is temperate, as it is certainly well-written. Here and there one regrets to see phrases such as "the supreme achievement of priest-craft" dragged from a dishonorable retirement, or to hear a charge so often and so ably refuted as that the Church "strangled science at birth" repeated with no apparent suspicion of the discredit that has descended upon them. Such things, as Mr. Frost should be aware, are no longer used in reputable argument. Along with many other prejudices of which he washes his hands in an opening paragraph, they may be, to use his own words, "ignored with both safety and dignity."

The case is rather different with Mr. Frost's main

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thesis, which is, briefly, and as his title bids us expect, the "alien" character of the congress. "The traditional Americanism which has endured till recently," he tells us, "has certain characteristics which can be debated only in minor detail; it established a fairly definite group-mind which, in spite of recent unsettlement, is still dominant over the greater part of the country, and forms the unwritten premises and assumptions of most of our national thought. Measured against this actual standard, the alien character of the Chicago celebration is clear."

Allowing Mr. Frost his standard, even though honesty compels him to admit it is not "generally accepted," it is interesting to proceed, and to see wherein the congress either failed to measure up to it, or, in some vague fashion, exceeded it.

The first, strangely enough, is its success. The very effectiveness of the congress tells against it in the mind of the typical (but hypothetical) American whom Mr. Frost envisages brooding over the littered and trampled ground at Soldiers' Field and Mundelein. "Perhaps," he conjectures rather wistfully, "the difficulty lay in the perfection of the services."

The second is its lack of simplicity—its departure from the democratic ideal as understood by the average American. "The incongruity of such royal state being kept by any man who is truly the representative of the One who had not whereon to lay his head, is so great that in the typically American mind the idea is wholly rejected." And again: "The mind could feel the fitness of black-robed Jesuits chanting their Masses to Indian savages . . . but it could not fit these enormously magnified ceremonies into any place in American life."

The third and fourth reasons seem, at first sight, mutually contradictory. But they are easily intelligible when the line of Mr. Frost's thought is followed carefully and his feeling that the questions raised by the congress are not primarily religious, but "politico-nativistic" is taken into account. One is the heterogeneous nature of the crowd. "The programs were printed in thirteen languages. . . . 'The Church Universal' was a comment heard more than once as the ranks marched past. It is a proud boast—but not an American boast." While, on the other hand, "there was to be seen a distinct likeness in the faces of all the prelates. Every one had been stamped, it seemed, with the seal of the Church Paternal. They might be humble or high in power, but all were part of a great paternalistic system. America, it has been said, is individualistic."

To examine Mr. Frost's arguments in detail, to trace each one to a misunderstanding of the Church's conception of its mission in a world of infinite variation in color, in temperament, in tradition, would consume an entire issue of The Commonweal. But one or two suggestions will not be wasted if they clear up a misconception that lies at the root of a good deal of criticism, open or covert, when an outward display of the Church's antiquity and universality takes place. There can be no doubt that, latent in the mind of that being whom Mr. Frost terms "the traditional American," there is a distaste for the pomps and ceremonies of an older world. His early experience, at the dawn of his own history, and when the national imagination received its ineffaceable stamp, taught him to associate it with hectoring governors and litigious crown lawyers. The religious forms that reached him first were an extreme revulsion even from what relics of ritual the "reformed" church had preserved. But to carry what is a mere association of ideas into serious argument at a day when the world has learned only too well under what prim outward conformity with the mass overwhelming power and real control can subsist, is misleading and even disingenuous.

Corporate display and splendor, indeed, are the shallowest of reasons on which to base a charge of arrogance or desire to impress. If they reach many of us today with an alien air, it is because we have grown apart from the mediaeval ideal that gave to God and his worship "until it hurt"—because we have grown up so in the compromise which satisfies its sense of obligation to spiritual things by no more than decency and decorum demand.

The root of the misunderstanding (we believe it is a misunderstanding, and less and less, as years pass, hostility or sourness) lies in a failure to understand the function of the Church in relation to the world. It is a Church forever "passing on." It is by no accident that the processional form bulks so largely in its ritual. It is not a very comfortable church, as the storm on the final day of the congress came to remind us all. It is, in a sense, a recalcitrant church. It has never been tempted from its gipsying to take up its home in any one country—to accept the repose and repute that come from absolute alignment with any one country's racial ambitions and preoccupations. And yet, on occasion, as has happened over and over again—in Ireland, in Poland, in Alsace in our own days—it has been the one centre round which a martyred and denied nationality has been able to rally. It is un-American; but only in the same sense that it is un-French, un-German, un-European, and un-Asiatic. It has seen too much pass—it has passed too much itself—to be troubled when, at any given phase in a national development, its ancient order is felt to be alien or vaguely oppressive. But it has also shown how, at a single moment, when eternity touches time, thousands who are "Irish mostly, French Canadians, Poles, Slovaks, a few Germans" can become so many bowed heads, so many shadowed faces upon which now only the seal of the "Church Paternal" and of its Eternal Father rests. And this fact should move those who, with Mr. Frost, are lamenting "the lack of assimilation of recent immigration," to a little timely and fruitful thought.

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THE COMMONWEAL

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WEEK BY WEEK

WE are not inclined to believe that there will be—at least in the near future—any radical change in the official United States attitude toward the settlement of the debt problem. But Senator Borah's energetic remark, combined with certain statements from foreign sources, has certainly started a good deal of healthy discussion. To this no one has contributed with greater forcefulness than former Secretary of War Baker, whose appeal to the national idealism was adroitly linked with the remark that business would surely profit from a generous settlement of all war obligations. Naturally, if we can serve idealism and safeguard commerce in one and the same breath, the prospect is bright and worthy enough. Only it would be more helpful and convincing if some tabulation of the specific advantages to be gained from debt annulment could be arrayed in concrete form for the benefit of those incredulous tax-payers who enlist the vigilant watchfulness of Mr. Coolidge. Most of these believe, with relative vehemence, that we have been somewhat too idealistic during recent years; and a large proportion of them are quite unaware of what beneficent effect the erasure would have upon their business ventures. To offset these concrete convictions, the friends of debt annulment must summon up no less concrete and equally convincing facts. We believe that some of these, at least, will be forthcoming in the near future. Once Europe regains some solidarity of consciousness, it will reflect more distinctly the economic and industrial wounds from which it suffers. These, we believe, are deepest and most cancerous in Germany and Russia, upon whose well-being the stability of the continent nevertheless depends. To deal with other countries separately and apart from Europe as a whole is, therefore, poor financial policy and will be proved more palpably unsatisfactory to Americans as the sixty-two years drift on.

IT begins to be apparent that the religious controversy in Mexico may have an extremely beneficent sociological effect. Forced to resist the attacks of the government against the principle of liberty of conscience, large numbers of people are waking up to the fact that there is something like public opinion; that this is a weapon far easier to handle than artillery and considerably less destructive; and that a majority which is really interested in having its way will, in the long run, win out—provided its convictions and purposes are right. We think that the democratic organization of Mexico will be a slow process, extending over a long period of time: at any rate, the present struggle between the Catholic bishops and Señor Calles is by no means on the brink of a solution. The benefits of civilization—and in a particular sense, of religion—are seldom delivered by fast freight. They depend entirely upon the demand expressed for them, and cannot effectively be shoved down people's throats with gun-powder or pompous edicts. The rule of faith being essentially a discipline, times of persecution are often fundamentally helpful for the reason that they develop stamina and resourcefulness. It is therefore a relief to see that such Catholic opinion in the United States as was in favor of allying the struggle in Mexico with extremely doubtful means toward victory, is steadily dwindling. We shall have to take a long breath and begin the real work to be done—a work which, in the first place, is a gathering of accurate knowledge about the situation; and in the second place, perhaps, an organized interest in the vast hordes of Mexicans now resident upon United States soil and dependent upon United States institutions. Perhaps later generations will note, as a signal instance of the wisdom of the Holy See, that it was content, in the midst of the embroglio, to recommend only prayer.

DR. WINNINGTON INGRAM, Lord Bishop of London, was once much in the public eye. His recommendation as a tract for the times of a piece of trashy sensationalism entitled When It Was Dark, will be remembered; no less his complaisant attitude toward the wholesale destruction of Wren's noble churches in order that fat ground-rents might roll into the establishment. Of late his repute has been overshadowed by that of a minor member of Saint Paul's chapter, the witty and gloomy Dean Inge. The latest pronouncement of London's episcopal head will not add greatly to his reputation for foresight or good sense. Traveling in Canada, Dr. Ingram has been struck by the large number of non-English stock who are farming (and populating) the empty acres of the West, and he

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utters a cry of racial alarm. "Do not let us hide our faces from the real danger," cries the Bishop. "I know perfectly well that not all Canadians are as loyal to the British empire as those in Toronto and Ontario." And the bogey of "annexation to the United States" is dragged once more from its ancient and cobwebbed retreat.

ON the face of the matter, it is not quite clear why any burning desire for annexation should come from the "Poles and Galicians and Lord knows who," who are the Bishop's chief concern. The best answer to his fears is to be found in the tribute (a little grudging, one can well believe) which the traveling dignitary is forced to pay to the loyalty of a very much larger and more cohesive element—the French Canadians in Quebec and elsewhere. In their steadfastness the British empire is reaping the fruit of a very wise and tolerant policy, forced on them it is true, by the circumstances of the times. To assure its reproduction among the new immigrants, all that is necessary it seems to one who is neither Anglican nor Nordic, is a similar ukase laid in their interests on meddlesome fingers and muddled heads, a goodly proportion of which still remain in "Toronto and Ontario."

JUST seventeen years have passed since the sudden and unheralded landing of a twenty-five horse-power monoplane on the English cliffs near Sandgate, brought home to the world, in a dramatic fashion that none could escape, the dawn of a new era in transit—and, incidentally, an end of the isolation from anything but naval attack that twenty-one miles of sea had afforded Britain in the past. The daring pilot, Louis Bleriot, who thus made history, has just celebrated the anniversary by making what for him was a second cross-channel trip, in a 420 horse-power air-liner. Optimists will see in the technical progress achieved, the thousand-mile flights that are now a matter of daily routine, all that could possibly be demanded of a period comparatively so brief. Doubters will not feel quite so sure. Even the confident prophecy of the New Republic that commercial development is "too characteristically in the tempo of our whole civilization not to come true," will strike them less as expert opinion than as a rather striking example of what might be called the new mysticism.

THEY will point, with some effect, to the parallel of the railroad, which, within an equal period, from 1830 to 1847, had not only overcome the prejudices and fears of all but the most timid and hidebound of passengers, but was already exercising its profound influence over the economic life of England and America, and casting its shadow over the world at large. To pretend that the progress of aviation has anything to show comparable to this, would be absurd. Until bulky goods and, above all, passengers who do not take chances, are carried by it in the regular course of traffic, it cannot, admittedly, be run upon a commercial basis, and this cannot take place until the narrow margin of safety has been broadened. When all possible tribute has been paid to the skill and bravery of inventors and pilots who overcome gravity through speed, it has to be owned that until some method of securing stability in the air when the motive power is at rest has been achieved, aviation itself, as a practical proposition, remains at something of a standstill. Recent experiments with parachute attachments, which have given a fair measure of success, indicate along what lines the problem is likely to be tackled.

POPULAR idolism burst all bonds surging to see Rudolph Valentino's slumbering face and Gertrude Ederle's triumphant smile. The millions of New Yorkers who participated in both demonstrations merely did their duty by the whole country, which will probably regret to its dying day not having been able to attend. There is something artificial, even something morbid, in this emotional impulsiveness which seeks satisfaction in a stare. No doubt it is old and deeply rooted in primitive human nature; it is not associated with any high standard of values; and it invites the bitter satire of those who feel they have outgrown it. But after all, isn't it beautifully generous? Millions who themselves never rise above a humdrum level, who know their destiny is to be mute and inglorious, cheer lustily and unselfishly for others who have done things very well. Of course these things are of a kind understandable to millions. A feat of swimming, a blaze of passionate acting, and early death—the best literature celebrates these in its record of the Hellespont, Coquelin and Keats. But citizens on a level with the best literature are seldom as charitable as the crowd. The sense of self-importance somehow dims the applause meted out to exquisite merit. Perhaps even a poet might draw a record throng on Broadway if his brethren in the profession were not so dead against being enthusiastic about his work. Education probably has profited by its definition as training designed to make apparent things well done; it would profit further if it could imply getting out a thundering brass band in honor of a Greek scholar or even an intelligent doctor of economics. The crowd, in time, might then go far toward consenting to revise somewhat its list of idols.

IN one of the earliest issues of The Commonweal, we drew sustenance from certain reflections on Anatole France written by Stuart P. Sherman. And even though the crowded years of this estimable critic's New York career seemed to lure him away from the definite humanistic tenets with which he had begun to teach and write, those paragraphs on the "great sceptic" might still be used to exemplify Mr. Sherman at his best. No doubt he was always somewhat con-

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strained and repressed by the academic atmosphere which had created him—unable to feel his own way enthusiastically into the new books and minds, inclined to repose happily upon the older classic letters which men like Paul Elmer More and Irving Babbitt had taught him to understand. His real mission was that he approached democracy with the offer to teach it traditional culture which, until then, had been rather an aristocratic affair. The savor of his writing was due to the fact that it retained all the best arts of pedagogy—intelligence, pertinent presentation, wit, and human interest. It pleased even those who were a bit stunned by the author's moral temperance. No doubt Mr. Sherman, in his four-square moods, really felt that the "new literature" had been created for the benefit of exotic maidens and boys who had gone wrong in college or New York. This feeling was extremely valuable. It created an intelligent, and therefore a fructifying, opposition. But Mr. Sherman's best work had no connection with words so relative as "new" and "young." Through his agency, many people who might otherwise have remained quite ignorant of the matter, awoke to the fact that mankind has spent some odd thousands of years testing its ideas and its art; that, after all, there are mental standards quite as truly as there is a monetary standard; and that when a young man has gone so far as to read a Zola novel, he has not yet necessarily outstripped Plato. All this will be remembered thankfully by very many who read, almost with a sense of deep personal loss, the news of Mr. Sherman's sudden death.

ADVANCE news indicates that the convention of the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, to be held this year at Saint Mary's, Notre Dame, Indiana, during the week of September 4, will be attended by a very large number. The work of the federation has attracted the most favorable notice everywhere, and the importance of Catholic graduates as a force in the making of public opinion grows with each year. No better site could have been chosen for the convention than St. Mary's, at which the Sisters of the Holy Cross have established one of the most beautiful women's colleges in the United States. The program arranged includes addresses by distinguished clergymen and leaders in educational activity, as well as a carefully planned social calendar. It is to be hoped that the coming convention will serve as a rallying point from which the energies of the federation will set out to achieve even more and better things.

THOSE who have seen queer aboriginal faces staring with almost infinite patience down the crimson trails which lead away from Albuquerque or Santa Fé, must have experienced also a sudden, intimate conviction that the Indian will remain. Years ago reports were widely circulated to the effect that the once mighty western tribes were dying out—even as the Iroquois and their enemies had vanished from the scene. Now we know that the redskin abides and thrives in as much of the atmosphere of his forefathers as contemporary civilization will countenance. In one important respect, the western Indians have a tradition which identifies them historically with the life of white men on the continent. Missionaries loved and struggled for the rough old settlements in almost every district of the northwest and southwest. Names like those of Father Badin and Bishop Marty blend with the chosen pseudonyms of the Franciscan padres. Our own time has not suffered this missionary fervor to die. The present-day work of priests and nuns, of catechists and instructors, continues under less glamorous conditions than of old, but continues faithfully.

FEW know to what a great extent the success of this work is due to the financial support given by the Marquette League, a society of laymen which was organized twenty-five years ago as the effective answer to the plea of the Reverend Doctor Henry G. Ganss, then an official of the Catholic Indian Bureau and personally well acquainted with the mission territory. To date, the league has contributed about $500,000 to the work, and has erected more than eighty chapels in Indian territory. It helps to support hundreds of priests and sisters, and to assure the maintenance of schools. The officials of the league include Judge Alfred A. Talley as president, Reverend William Flynn as secretary-general, and Reverend John J. Wynne, S.J., as one of the directors. It maintains offices at 105 East Twenty-second Street, New York City. The efforts of the league ought to interest not only more people, but many more people. Here is a great American work which is being done and—as is apparent from all records—done excellently.

THE gradual disappearance of all traffic regulations for readers of literature, current and classic, is probably not an undiluted advantage. At all events, the following words of caution, written by Paul Bourget, seem to apply very well to the case with which they deal: "I shall admit that I do not share the unrestrained appetite of our time for the letters of famous men, or for their memoirs and diaries. The information thus gathered seems very reliable, but in reality is frequently most inexact and even insincere. An egoist who keeps a diary and who takes snapshots, every evening, of his state of mind or of the facts and events happening in his neighborhood, is continuously falsifying his perception of his own personality and that of others, either through unconscious vanity, or ill will, or—as was the case with the Goncourts—a blind and confused acceptance of the most niggardly rumors. The memorialist, for his part, is one who, though he may have had a share in public affairs, is a partisan survivor rendered suspect by his passions—Saint-Simon is the most remarkable exam-

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ple—or by that inevitable deformation of the past which follows the working together of memory and imagination. In so far as letters are concerned, the situation is hardly different. To write to anyone means summoning to mind and then visualizing the effect which the phrases you are employing will have upon the person addressed. Instinctively your thought and your emotion will adapt themselves to this purpose. A rectification is therefore required of those who would use these documents which, while no doubt sincere, are not completely sincere. One must take time to examine these diaries, memoirs, and letters—a delicate task which most people disregard entirely."

NEW ENGLAND'S WISE MAN

THE dissolution of Emerson's old age by physical and mental infirmity was probably a kind of index to the quality of that reckless spiritual dynamism which his circle, and to some extent, his age, professed. It is curious to note how few of those who lived themselves out as whole-hearted romantics, either in America or other countries, endured long enough to speak wisely de Senectute in the manner of antique Cicero. New England's own Augustan best fell early: Melville sputtered out in unintelligible dithyrambs and final silence; Hawthorne was helpless after his return from abroad; and poor Henry David Thoreau watched his body collapse around his sturdy heart. Bearing these things in mind, one can possibly get a better impression of the significance of Dr. Charles William Eliot, "grand old man of Harvard," whose span of life closed within eight years of a century.

There was something uncannily well-regulated about Dr. Eliot, and whatever he did or said seemed to be part of a careful plan drawn up for an era when resources were available to push enterprises to their conclusion. His fortune was that, at an early age, he could take charge of an educational institution which was setting the pace for America. He had immense faith in the institution and in the people who would take advantage of it. But obviously, if the two elements—institution and people—were to coalesce harmoniously, it was necessary to find the rhythm, the tempo, according to which the national existence was really moving. Dr. Eliot succeeded. Gone were the days when a chosen few could be segregated for the experience of a traditional intellectual discipline, after which, as viri fortes in the old manner, they might find their places in the guardianship of the public trust. The practical needs of the American mind were great. There was a fierce hunger for intellectual liberalism, but this could be gratified only by subjecting it to the busier business of life. The popular demand was for new, professional disciplines supplemented by liberal knowledge of a contiguous kind. The old religious humanism, which began with a pretty definite vision of what the personality-tree would look like after it had finished growing up, seemed out of date.

Fierce and lengthy debates have closed about the educational ideas sponsored by Dr. Eliot. Both the humanists and the defenders of the ratio studiorum discovered and exposed the manifold weaknesses of the elective system and other proposed reforms. Nevertheless, these endured and prospered because, as it seems to us, they were based upon a profound comprehension of what America wanted and needed at a particular time. It remains to be seen whether this time will last much longer, or whether it is not already nearing a close. The growth of graduate law-schools, for instance, has been extraordinary; but so also has been the increase in the crop of lawyers. Whether it will pay the individual and the nation to continue at the present rate, is a serious question, upon the communal answer to which will depend the future interest in this kind of education. In so far as liberal studies are concerned, the fact is already apparent that the gathering of mere knowledge without reference to the structure of the human person leads only to the impasse of meticulously reared and unusable mountains of further knowledge. Dr. Eliot, curiously enough, seems to have divined this fact in setting forth the idea which led to the notorious Five-Foot Book-Shelf. The only trouble with this neatly labeled selection was that it did not educate or humanize; and after all, these acts have been more or less synonomous with the purposes of the college. Humanism's ultimate victory over the Eliot idea is therefore only a matter of time—because humanism is logically and psychologically correct.

One hesitates to make a phrase try to do more than its duty, but there is a great deal of truth in the saying that the point about Dr. Eliot was that he distinguished between discipline and organization; between growing into something and being made into something. This is borne out particularly well in his random declarations about the Catholic Church. He always admired the "Roman system," as it can so conveniently be styled—the ability to marshal a great many people to the support of an idea or a cult. In his honest fashion he thought the "system" might be improved—and in this, of course, he was right. Organization is about the only thing in the Church that could be measurably bettered. It is constantly being changed, and constantly suffering from the failure of human nature to carry on certain routine matters successfully. But Catholicism is primarily—one may say, essentially—a discipline, a way of growing into life. To this fundament of its character, Dr. Eliot was most blind, and whenever he said anything about it he usually missed the point by a mile. But after all, the weakness was typical of Americans of his kind. If the point could once be made clear, the position of the Church in this country would be utterly different from what it is or what it ever has been.

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SPOKESMEN OF ETERNITY

By WILFRED MALLON

THE cycle of history has brought round once more a distinct renaissance of interest in sacred oratory. As in every art's gallery of fame we find the Church has placed its masters; so in the field of oratory we discover a glorious galaxy of preachers worthy of the golden era of Grecian eloquence. Indeed, the catalogue of those who have won distinction is so great that a short study can include but the most luminous stars—those whose names mark the epochs in the history of this sacred art.

In the hands of unlearned men, Christ left the destinies of His Church. The primitive Christians were of classes that scarcely knew the schools. Hence, oratory, as we know the term, found no place in the Church of the first two centuries. As soon, however, as the doctrine of the Nazarene was accepted as the religion of the cultured classes, its teachers became learned men, frequently recruited from the most talented scholars and orators of the day. The simple exposition of apostolic days, which could not engage the higher artistic faculties, gave way to the free oration and the elaborate homily of the third century. Origen, the learned scholar of Alexandria, was the first to make the art of the Athenian orator the instrument of the law of love. The beginning was a modest one, but it was a beginning.

The development of the art during the next century was phenomenal; and already in the latter part of the fourth century patristic eloquence reached its zenith at the hands of Constantinople's "Mouth of Gold," Saint John Chrysostom; and of Cappadocia's "triumvirate of genius," Basil; his brother Gregory of Nyssa; and Gregory of Nazianzen.

In the first of these, John of Antioch, surnamed Chrysostom, "Mouth of Gold," because of his eloquence, the Church had its greatest preacher. Born about the middle of the fourth century, at a time when Basil and Gregory of Nazianzen were schoolfellows at Athens of Julian, the future apostate, the youthful Chrysostom attended the lectures of the far-famed Libanius of Antioch, whose learning and eloquence he eventually surpassed. Drawn to a knowledge of God and a consequent love of Him, the youthful scholar cast his lot with the anchorites of Antioch; and later with the saintly solitaries of the desert. Ill health forced him back into the world. He was ordained priest, and for twelve consecutive years, from 386 to 398, he occupied the cathedral pulpit of Antioch. It was here, in 387, during his series of sermons, On the Statues, that his extraordinary power as an orator first became manifest. His fame spread far and wide, even beyond the confines of Asia Minor; and in 398 there came an unexpected call to the important bishopric of Constantinople, where for twenty years the "Mouth of Gold" preached with an eloquence that has had no equal.

Cardinal Newman, in his beautiful appreciation of Saint John Chrysostom, says of him:

> Great as was his gift of oratory, it was not by the fertility of his imagination, or the splendor of his diction that he gained the surname, "Mouth of Gold." We shall be very wrong if we suppose that fine expressions, or rounded periods, or figures of speech, were the credentials by which he claimed to be the first doctor of the East. His oratorical power was but the instrument, by which he readily, gracefully, adequately expressed—expressed without effort and with felicity—the keen feelings, the living ideas, the earnest practical lessons which he had to communicate to his hearers. He spoke because his heart, his head, were brimful of things to speak about. It would be a great mistake, in speaking of his style, to ask whether it was Attic or Asiatic, terse or flowing, when its distinctive praise was that it was natural. His unrivaled charm . . . lies in his singleness of purpose, his fixed grasp of his aim, his noble earnestness.

Finally, like his illustrious predecessors in the Assembly of Athens and the Senate of Rome, Chrysostom, by his very power, caused his own destruction. Enraged at his fearless and eloquent denunciations of the sinfulness and luxury of the court, the Empress Eudoxia forced him into exile. In 407, the great doctor and preacher of the eastern Church died unattended, on the very confines of the empire. Truly he was the "justus et tenax vir," whose sanctity and eloquence were not valued rightly by those about him. Today, in the field of demonstrative oratory, he is called by many the master of the Christian era, and even sometimes he is thought to have surpassed the immortal Demosthenes; in the field of sacred oratory he stands supreme.

Of the great orator's contemporaries, Basil attained his success in simple, unemotional elegance; the Bishop of Nyssa, in enthusiastic and almost grandiloquent panegyrics; while Nazianzen's style resembled closely that of Constantinople's golden trumpet of God. Basil and Nazianzen, having begun their work of preaching perhaps a quarter of a century before Saint John, may be called the pioneers of Christian eloquence. Both were trained in the finest rhetorical schools of the age; and both became distinguished scholars. Their orations, we are told, displayed a command of the purest Greek; high imaginative powers, fiery zeal, and a transparent sincerity of intention. Critics have placed Nazianzen above Basil and the Bishop of Nyssa; and second only to the great doctor of Constantinople, Saint John Chrysostom.

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At the hands of these four scholars and saints, the oratory of the East rose to an eminence which fifteen centuries have failed to surpass. But the popularity of florid masterpieces led less talented and less saintly men to artificiality, theatrical mannerisms, and an effusiveness in panegyrics which soon brought about the downfall of this precious art. They essayed a task too great for them; and "relying on wings fastened by Daedalean wax, were destined to give their names to the crystal sea."

The western Church, slower to develop the artistic side of preaching, produced four noteworthy orators —Ambrose, Augustine, Leo, and Gregory the Great. The latter's position among the orators is merited rather by his influence on succeeding preachers, than by his excellence. None of the western orators, however, can be compared to advantage with the preachers of the East. In his funeral orations, Ambrose reached the highest perfection in the West. Augustine and Leo followed closely the methods of Chrysostom and the Bishop of Nyssa respectively. Gregory stands out as the most influential preacher of the West—particularly as a homilist. His extremely simple and inelegant sermons were models of the allegorical method of interpretation which was to prevail in the middle-ages. He is well styled the forerunner of mediaeval simplicity.

The early years of the sixth century saw the remaining traces of ancient culture disappear in the tremendous social upheaval that displaced the order of the empire. Civilized Europe was trying to assimilate the pagan and savage hoards of the North. The simple scriptural exposition, precluding the artistic, quickly supplanted the florid homilies and elaborate masterpieces of patristic eloquence. These latter would have evoked only ridicule from the unschooled barbarian. The mediaeval Church, teeming with saints and learned doctors, has given us no preacher comparable with those of the classic period. She had no need of such.

To understand the popularity of preaching in the Church of the mis-named "dark ages," we must read the lives of such men as Anselm, Bernard of Clairvaux, Vincent Ferrer, Saint Anthony of Padua, and Bernardine of Sienna. Though perhaps they did not attain the highest perfection of oratory, nevertheless all were eminent scholars and saints whose eloquence gave them international influence. Of these, Bernardine of Sienna deserves especial mention. For long years he wielded sway over the turbulent and luxuriant cities of Italy. Historians say that he was "listened to as another Paul, and penitents flocked to confession like ants." The chivalry of these centuries was inspired largely by the eloquent preachers of the Crusades, among whom the outstanding figure was Jacques de Vitry.

Renaissance preaching, with its too sudden and hence ill-digested Greek culture, frequently substituted affectation before the learned, and burlesque before the ignorant, in place of simple sincerity. Manuscripts contained such marginal directions as: "Now sit, stand up, mop your brow, shriek." The following quotation from a bishop's Christmas sermon is an evidence of the ridiculous overloading with classical references: "The Infant Jesus is our Bellerophon, who, mounted upon the Pegasus of His humility, winged by the union of the Deity, has overcome the world." Monks, in an effort to counteract this tendency which had infected even the court of Rome, aimed directly at coarseness, and this brought simplicity into disfavor. Out of this struggle between pseudo culture and hollow declamation on the one hand; and, on the other, overdone simplicity and gracelessness, there arose a mighty but pitiful figure in Savonarola. The great Dominican of Florence, by his passionate recklessness in denouncing an age with which he was so completely out of sympathy, by his eloquent boldness in rebuking the luxuriant and pompous court of Rome, by his daring defiance of the commands of a renaissance Pope, attained almost the pinnacle of eloquence—but paid for it with his blood. In him, the renaissance put to death its greatest preacher. Fortunately, the period was of short duration. The saner ecclesiastics rebelled against it, and the distant mutterings of the coming storm gave men something else to think about.

The colossal religious revolution of the fifteenth century, when finally it broke, caused a quick reform in the pulpit. God's newest combatants, the Company of Jesus, stemmed the uprising by means of its learned polemists. The air was too charged with controversy, however, to favor elegant preaching; hence the period can boast of no masters. Vieyra in Portugal and Segneri in Italy were the most famous of the Jesuit orators who preached during the Reformation and post-Reformation periods.

The next great epoch centers around the seventeenth-century classic revival in France. The masters, Bossuet, Bourdaloue, Massillon, and Fénelon, were by no means the only preachers of merit. They attained perfection in an art that had many proficients.

In Jacques Benigne Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, the Church had a preacher comparable to the unequaled orator of ancient days, Saint John Chrysostom. The great French prelate, in his funeral orations, reached the most exalted heights of panegyrical eloquence. Like the director of a mighty orchestra, this Demosthenes of the French pulpit played upon the hearts of those before him until the contagion of his enthusiasm seized them. Then, filled with divine frenzy, aflame with the concentrated emotions of those myriad vibrating hearts, he abandoned himself to the inspiration of the moment and poured forth his noble soul in a stream of eloquence—exercising a magisterial sway over those before him, sweeping them with him to the rapt contemplation of the Trinity, or casting them with streaming eyes at the foot of the cross.

A son of Loyola, Louis Bourdaloue, "the preacher

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of kings and the king of preachers," frequently surpassed the eloquence of his intimate friend and admirer, Bossuet; but he is ranked second to the great French divine. The Bishop of Meaux was preëminently the orator; the great Jesuit was essentially a preacher. While Bossuet is without an equal in grandeur and magnificence, Bourdaloue is master in solid, rigorous, irresistible logic. His appeal is always made to the intellect, with never a diversion merely to dazzle or delight the imagination, and rarely an effort to excite the emotions. The Society of Jesus recognizes him as her foremost preacher.

Massillon, the Oratorian, is similar in many respects to both the preachers ranked above him. He was sublime, but never attained the sublimity of Bossuet; he was logical, but fell far short of the invincible logic of Bourdaloue. Critics of the eighteenth century thought him superior to the Bishop of Meaux and the eloquent Jesuit; but the sounder judgment of time has placed him beneath them.

Unfortunately, Fénelon's sermons were never written—hence we have no means of forming a true judgment of him. But to give him a niche in the temple of fame, it is enough to say that, besides being one of the most attractive, brilliant, and versatile churchmen of the seventeenth century, he is worthy of a place among the great preachers of so glorious a period in the history of sacred oratory.

A like revival of oratory took place in Italy, Germany, Spain, and England. The preachers outside of France, however, lacked the stimulus of an admiring monarch who craved religious discourse; and hence they did not reach the sublimity of eloquence that marked the revival there.

A final important period finds its master in the eloquent French Dominican, Père Lacordaire. In Paris he introduced the new conference method in the pulpit of Notre Dame which he occupied intermittently, from 1835 to 1852, together with his intimate friend, the Jesuit, de Ravignan. Lacordaire, like Bossuet, after having made himself thoroughly conversant with his subject, spoke on the inspiration of the moment.

Here again, other lands had preachers; but none so honored by posterity. Wiseman is held in high esteem. Newman, indeed, deserves the greatest praise; but Newman the scholar, rather than Newman the orator. His sermons were always given from manuscript. Again, there was the eloquent Irish Dominican, Father Burke, whom many have called the greatest English-speaking orator of the nineteenth century. In our own land, we also have had great preachers. There have been Archbishops Ryan and Ireland, our best known prelate-preachers. Almost every religious order has given to the pulpit preachers of merit. Though our sacred oratory of the past half-century is conceded to have been good, it is not judged as eloquent. But is it not too soon to judge? A future age will be less prejudiced and more just.

A PENSION IN ITALY

By ARNOLD WHITRIDGE

SOONER or later everyone who travels stays at a pension; unless he be so crippled with riches that he falls a helpless victim into the maw of the Ritz. We bear no ill will to Mr. Ritz or Mr. Carlton, or to any of the numerous proprietors of Grand Hotels scattered over Europe; but one and all, they are guilty of excessive humility.

They make the mistake of going three-quarters of the way to meet the traveler instead of making him go three-quarters of the way to meet them. They pride themselves quite justly on their perfect food and their faultless service. They can provide an instantaneous glass of iced water for every American; and an instantaneous cup of tea for every Englishman, at any hour of the day or night. Apparently, they strive to safeguard the poor tourist from the slightest suggestion of nostalgia. Not for a moment must he suspect that he is in a foreign country. In the bosom of the family, these super hotelkeepers may be ardent patriots; but professionally, they are blatant internationalists. Anybody who wants to know what the world will be like when national boundaries are effaced, need only stay at a big hotel in London, Paris, or New York; after which surfeit of efficiency and convenience he will return to the more limited perfection of his own home or his own country with a light heart.

The proprietor of a pension is different. He, or more often she, is equally anxious to make you comfortable; but naturally enough, as she is the hostess, it must be her standard of comfort and not yours. If you are willing to play the game her way, and not insist on eggs for breakfast and hot water in the middle of the night, you will save a vast amount of money, and what is even more important, the shackles of your own identity will mysteriously drop away from you. That is the great charm about life in a pension; you see your fellow-men in only two dimensions. In their own country these American, English, and German tourists may be substantial people with hosts of friends and dependents, but in a pension they are suddenly deprived of their background.

Take that English clergyman who sits in the corner of the salle-à-manger with his plump wife and his two rosy-cheeked daughters. At home he may be a militant Anglo-Catholic; a thorn in the flesh of his Low-Church bishop; but we know him only as a resolute sightseer who attacks the Italian language with a placid determination that confounds the waiter. And that loquacious American who has the knack of making the most reluctant people his intimate friends—is he an impecunious professor, or is he the head of the biggest biscuit-tin factory in the world? He will tell us, if we give him half a chance; but we really prefer to have it left an open question.

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Then there are those old ladies whose knowledge about pensions is so extensive. They are equally at home in Malaga and Hindhead; in Florence and Luchon. Poor things, they have been living in exile since the war. One of them is a Russian; I have decided that she owned vast estates in the Caucasus and only escaped death during the revolution by disguising herself as a mujik. The other two are English who have been forced into exile more prosaically by the high cost of living. If only the tall one with dark eyes had accepted the offer of that young subaltern thirty years ago, she would now be living in Mayfair, the wife of a distinguished major-general. Of course he came into money from a distant cousin just after she refused him; but perhaps they would not have been happy—and anyway what is the use of regretting it now?

The American lady is perhaps the most interesting member of our pension family. She knows more about Italy than any of us, and the efficient Signora treats her with the deference due to the doyen of the troupe. Who is the Italian with whom she has long conversations every afternoon? Are they planning an anti-Fascist coup, as I have assured myself—or is my sceptical companion right in insisting that it is only an Italian lesson?

Perhaps we are not really a very remarkable group at this pension, but we have become much absorbed in each other. Don't think that we have all become friends—or even acquaintances. There is too large a proportion of Anglo-Saxons for general conversation, and we have enough imagination between us to prefer private flights of fancy to feeble commonplaces about the weather. We study each other; we respect each other's idiosyncracies; we know that if that strapping German couple have had a big morning at the Uffizi we shall not get much of the macaroni—but we don't find it necessary to talk. Incidentally, we did see them this morning going through the gallery with an inexorable guide. "Come along," we heard him say, "you only have time to see the most important pictures"; and they followed him with that docility that the most high-spirited tourists end by acquiring. It took all the heart out of our sightseeing; perhaps we too ought to be concentrating on Botticelli's Spring, instead of dawdling over that sentimental Madonna by Sassoferrato. It was no good going back now, for we had suddenly reached the saturation point in pictures. A moment ago we seemed to have an unlimited appetite—now our capacity for appreciation is exhausted, and we can only think about lunch and our fellow-pensionnaires.

Mr. Blunden complains that literary critics don't like nature poetry because they see the world exclusively in terms of men and women. Whether or not that is true of the critics, it certainly is true of people who live in pensions. Probably it is because we are suddenly cut adrift from all those things that make up our normal life at home—no children, no business, no golf, and no reading. Let us admit at once that that gentle guide-book exercise and furtive skimming of other people's newspapers, is not genuine reading.

No, we are leading a strange life with one foot in a twentieth-century boardinghouse, while we drag the other behind us through palaces of the renaissance. We are associating with the greatest geniuses the world has ever known, and a scratch lot of stuffy people like ourselves, who are determined to see if they can catch the whiff of genius instead of accepting it scond-hand from Berenson and John Addington Symonds. The best of it is that we rather enjoy this double life, hustling from Michelangelo and the Della Robbias to the country clergyman and the old ladies. For one thing, it makes us forget that we mortal millions live alone. That may be a more rational way of life, and in the long run we would not have it otherwise—but it is not true at our pension. Here, most decidedly, we all live together.

Pediment

Music cannot stay,
But there's a way
To fix and save
Its flowing . . .
By marbled motion in a frieze,
In eave above the architrave,
Of figures poising and at ease
With discs for throwing.

But here today
Marble to music comes again,
Statues to men . . .
These dancers have been brave
Beyond their knowing.
For men to pose
As statues at their play
Is strangely far more beautiful,
More strong to pull
The cord of terror taut,
Than that a statue can
Be like a man.
Why?
What does it signify?
And no one knows.
This sculpture lives:
The discus thrower really throws.
The flying javelin is caught
But not before it gives,
In unaccounted ways,
A wound which will not mend.

Marble to music come again,
Statues to men,
And statues' shadows moving . . .
Proving
That all is music in the end
And only music stays.

Louise Townsend Nicholl.

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CONVERSATION AND MRS. WHARTON

By CLAUDE C. WASHBURN

MRS. WHARTON has recently given warning against the use of much conversation in novel-writing; and Mrs. Wharton's own craftsmanship is so universally esteemed that it behooves every writer to consider her argument.

Narrative, she says, should furnish the substance of a novel; dialogue, "that precious adjunct, should never be more than an adjunct," and should be used skilfully and sparingly—reserved for the culminating moments. The substitution of dialogue for narrative is wasteful and roundabout, and "the greater effect of animation, of presentness, produced by its excessive use," is paid for too dearly.

It can be admitted that conversation in a novel is obviously wasteful of space. Pages of talk can at any time be condensed into a few paragraphs of narrative. But so can the whole plot of a novel be condensed into a three-page synopsis which may even give the reader a tolerably accurate idea of the characters and their development. I have a vague feeling that a book actually exists, recording in this manner the plots of the "hundred best novels"; but the reason the feeling is vague is that I never heard of anyone's reading the book. A few years ago, in The Life and Death of Harriet Frean, Miss May Sinclair tried the experiment of relating the whole story of a woman's life in some sixty pages of rather large type; but, besides admiration for the author's cleverness, the only impression the book left on one reader at least was: "She was born; she lived rather futilely; she died. What does it matter?" Which is a very different impression indeed from that left in the mind by The Three Sisters or The Rector of Wyck.

Similarly, if one gains something by the drastic curtailing of conversation in a novel, one also, I think, loses vividness, and is, moreover, in danger of losing—or of never achieving—that quality of freshness which seems to me of almost supreme importance in a novel, and is, at any rate, something no truly great novel is ever without. Personally, I feel the lack of this freshness in Mrs. Wharton's novels. From beginning to end, they strike me as tired. I do not think this is because Mrs. Wharton is chary of conversation, but I think she is chary of conversation partly because she does not sufficiently esteem freshness or because she is incapable of writing freshly. Neither do I think this lack of freshness explained by the fact that her novels deal with delicate psychological problems; for so, too, did those of her master, Henry James, the best of which are written as freshly as Tom Jones.

There is an obvious tendency among contemporary novelists to get into more direct contact with their material; a feeling that through too much art, too much selection and arrangement of material, the fresh sense of reality has been lost, so that one sees the subject palely and refracted as through water. As a result of this reaction not a few novelists today seek to reproduce the raw material of art, deliberately calling upon the reader to do his own selection. Miss Dorothy Richardson, for example, presents one with the bewildering hodge-podge of sensation in her heroine's mind, and Mr. James Joyce goes her one—and everybody else two—better. At bottom, this very noticeable tendency in novel-writing is a revolt against literature itself, and therefore sterile—since literature is perforce a report on life, not life itself. If you have art you must have selection and arrangement. You get both even in Ulysses, which apparently sets out to chronicle everything that passed through a man's mind during the course of one day. You get both, if for no other reason, because the chronicling is being done by another man with individual traits.

Nevertheless, the tendency is of value, and will probably be of greatest value later on to other novelists than those who at present follow it to an impossible and self-contradictory extreme. It has restored freshness to the novel and impels writers to hold their faces close to the material they are observing.

At any rate, given this proper demand for the freshness of immediate contact with the facts, conversation can hardly be relegated to a minor position in novels. In it you are one step closer to the original facts than in narrative. You get the characters' actual words; you hear—or should—the very intonation of their voices. You get something direct (almost)—not at second-hand.

At least, you should be made to feel that you do. Actually you do not. The reason that you do not (and also the reason why I disagree with Mrs. Wharton's contention as to the wastefulness of conversation) is that nowhere else are selection, arrangement, and condensation more employed by the novelist than in the conversation of his characters—whereas, if he is a good novelist, nowhere else are they less apparent—a most delightful combination.

In real life, conversation is a heart-breaking morass where people stumble along up to their knees in mud, surprised and pleased if now and then two or three of them happen to emerge together upon the same hummock. It is aimless and heavy with repetitions. The mere thought of hearing any actual conversation, even the most brilliant, reproduced by a dictaphone makes one shudder. In a novel, all this material must be sifted carefully. The little turns of phrase characteristic of the different individuals must be retained (though used sparingly) and there must be interrup-

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tions, unfinished remarks, exclamations, to give the effect of actuality; but otherwise, of all the mass of spoken words that would have been poured out by living men and women of the kind and under the circumstances depicted, only those that reveal their speakers' personalities and push the story onward may be employed. In short, conversation in novels is a trick. (It is, indeed, scarcely less a trick than the development skilful writers occasionally, but warily, make of it by summarizing a conversation in the third person in such manner as to give the reader the impression of hearing the speakers' voices. "He hadn't, she said, done what she expected—oh, he hadn't!") But it is a perfectly fair trick, since it gives, with their own revealing turns of phrase, all that the speakers really had to say.

It may be admitted that here, too, a little vividness is lost by the writer's selection and condensation. The trick is not invariably convincing. And it is always the writer, a different person from the speaker, who is doing the selecting. The amazing vividness of Babbitt seems to me largely due to the fact that in that novel the characters did talk almost as they would have talked in real life—with the same vagueness, repetitions and aimlessness. But in Babbitt, Mr. Sinclair Lewis was dealing with people so simple and ingenuous as to be puerile; and as his thesis itself was just their aggressive futility it was actually helped by their being permitted to run on in that lifelike way.

There is a further objection that is often made to the use of much conversation in novels, which deserves consideration, though it seems to me a fallacy. This is that it is not facts themselves; but talk, talk, talk about facts; and those who make the objection are those who protest equally against the same thing in real life. I think, as I said, that they are mistaken. There is a vast deal of talk in life that is a futile waste of energy (it is found as commonly as anywhere else in "literary circles") but there is another kind of talk that is itself action. "I like a man who *does* things," is a common phrase; but when you pin the speaker down to what kind of man he means you usually discover that he does not mean a bricklayer or a plumber but a successful business man or a manufacturer. The latter are, in fact, men of action; but their action is almost entirely through words, largely spoken words. The business man dictates a letter of great importance to his stenographer, or in conference with his associates arrives through spoken words at a crucial decision; the manufacturer "barks an order" (I believe that is the proper phrase). Talk!—but equally action.

The truth is that the world in which nearly all those live who are apt to see this article is a world almost entirely made up of talk, and that this does not in the least mean that it is not also a world of action. A novel treating of this society—and most novels written by members of it will perforce treat of it—can hardly disregard the fact.

A FOUNT OF CULTURE

By GRENVILLE VERNON

THE extraordinary work, a work both religious and cultural, which is being accomplished by the Pius X School of Liturgical Music, at the College of the Sacred Heart in New York City, ought to be far more widely known than it is at present in Catholic circles. Yet, despite all obstacles, the summer session just closed drew to it no less than 178 students, while the regular yearly course had an enrolment of more than one hundred and fifty.

The summer session has been devoted entirely to instruction in the Gregorian Chant, as it was the suggestion of the Holy Father himself that all other forms of music permitted by the Motu Proprio of 1903 be omitted in favor of what may well be denominated a "counsel of perfection." It is in the pure Gregorian that Catholic liturgical music reaches its summit of achievement; and it was the Holy Father's desire that the Pius X School, the only school of its kind in America, might, during its summer session, give itself without compromise to the ideal. It is, in the last analysis, the love for the Gregorian Chant which the Pius X School aims to spread throughout our churches; and thus the session just ended has been peculiarly true to the purposes of the institution.

As the 178 students, of whom fifteen were priests, came from dioceses in all parts of the union, it is abundantly evident what a power for good the course has been. Every one of these students will return home—not only with a desire for reforming the music in their parish churches, but with a knowledge of how to set about doing it—a knowledge fostered not only by the lectures of Mother Stevens, Mrs. Justine Ward, Dom Virgil, and the other teachers at the school, but by daily practical demonstrations of Gregorian singing by a choir of 200 children of the Church of the Annunciation.

It is this practical instruction in liturgical singing which has given the Pius X School a distinction which is probably unique—not only in America but in Europe as well. The children of the parish school of the Church of the Annunciation are all trained in Gregorian singing by students of the regular winter course of the Pius X School—these students qualifying in this way as practical teachers of liturgical music and at the same time training a large body of children in the Gregorian style. These children, about five hundred, range in ages from six to fourteen. In addition, the Justine Ward High School has an enrolment of thirty graduates of the parish school, chosen because of their brilliancy in musical studies.

These girls, upon their graduation, are competent in their turn to become teachers. In this way the Pius X School at once educates its own students toward a mastery of the forms of liturgical music permitted by the Motu Proprio, trains a body of children capable of singing it, and makes possible the education of the most capable of these children so that they also may become teachers of what they have learned.

It is of good omen that Mother Stevens, the director of the school, is already in receipt of requests for the furnishing of such teachers—these requests coming from all parts of the United States, and one from as far away as New Zealand. The Pius X School, made possible through the devotion and generosity of Mrs. Justine Ward, and under the splendid direction of Mother G. Stevens, is already one of the most brilliant exemplars of Catholic culture in the new world.

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

The Ghost Train

THE curious effect of importing an entirely British play and altering its dialogue and setting so as to give it an American atmosphere was briskly reflected in the attitude of some of the newspaper critics toward The Ghost Train. Had the producers, A. H. Woods and Arch Selwyn, seen fit to retain the presumably original English setting, all might have been well—for in a mystery play, it is certainly no disadvantage to have strange things happen in a far-off country crowded with as many legends as rural England. But to have English actors transplanted to the neighborhood of Rockland, Maine, and to have a Scotland Yard detective the chief character, creates a certain initial scepticism and sense of unreality somewhat fatal to the mood required for a mystery "thriller."

A few quite unrelated vulgarities, rather in the A. H. Woods tradition, are also introduced at the instance (one suspects, though perhaps wrongly) of the American producers. Aside from these complicating factors, however, The Ghost Train has distinct merits. It lacks many of the tried and true formulae of The Bat type of play; and that fact has been held against it. For example, there is little or no suspense about the identity of the detective. There is little effort to throw dust in the eyes of the audience by making first one and then another character appear guilty. The whole suspense, on the contrary, hangs on whether certain amazing happenings are, or are not, supernatural in cause. Personally, I found this rather a refreshing change, a shifting of emphasis from mere plot to the theme itself, a sort of enlargement of background which gave the play an interest several degrees higher than a crossword puzzle. But the very critics who yell "hokum" so glibly when they recognize a familiar plot, seem to have fallen into their own trap by lamenting the lack of standard hokum in the present play.

And, speaking of the predominantly English cast, what amazing value rests in the pleasant and unforced diction of these players from overseas! It is not a question of broad or short vowels or unfamiliar inflections, but of the very essential of voice-production itself—an ability to project sound clearly to the farthest corner of the theatre without effort and without the least sense of declaiming lines. If one of the most gifted actors on our stage, Mr. Alfred Lunt, could add to his equipment the voice-production of the humblest English actors, he would stand almost beyond compare. To do this, it is quite unnecessary to acquire an "English accent." French actors, too, have a full knowledge and command of this fundamental. Good diction is as unrelated to national idiom as good looks—only that one is unfortunately born to one's looks and must work to achieve a clear speech. The truth is, American actors are lazy. Perhaps that is why so many of them succeed better on the screen than on the stage.

The Home Towners

GEORGE Cohan is back again—not "in person," but in another play quite in the Cohan mood. The Home Towners is a meandering, and occasionally highly amusing, account of what happens to otherwise sensible people when they allow themselves to become encrusted with local prejudice—be that the New Yorker's idea of Podunkville, or the Podunkian's view of New York. In this case, the conflict is between the respective narrow eye-glasses of Manhattan and South Bend—with the honors about equally divided.

Vic Arnold has come to New York and made a success there. He is about to marry the daughter of an ex-saloon keeper. A former pal of Arnold's, "Pig Head" Bancroft, arrives in New York for the wedding and immediately becomes convinced that Arnold is the victim of a climbing, money-grabbing family. Circumstantial evidence is on his side—and throughout the first act, Mr. Cohan allows us to see everything through the Bancroft glasses. Then the truth begins to come out—after Bancroft's interference has done its inevitable damage—and we begin to see Bancroft himself through the glasses of the Calhoon family, Arnold's future in-laws. An ingenious double stage-set and some rattling good dialogue make the second act spin along right merrily to its unhappy conclusion. It is only in the third act, when Mr. Cohan feels obliged to straighten out everything, that the tempo of the comedy lags and the mechanics of the plot squeak. This last act is really pretty poor fare.

The burden of the entire play is carried with ease and precision by Robert McWade as Bancroft. Here we have an actor of real intelligence who knows just what he is doing at every step. I tried the experiment several times during the performance of imagining his lines as they might have been declaimed or sung by an actor of only average ability. The result of this experiment was an appalling indictment of much that we are forced to endure in the theatre today. The lines alone would never have carried the play, but resourceful Mr. McWade gave to them the force of reality. This was accomplished largely through perfect repose, an unhurried sense of the value of time in making a point. Georgia Caine as Bancroft's wife showed the same keen sense of true comedy repose, and William Elliott as Arnold gave a smooth if not highly pointed performance. Miss Peg Entwistle, as Beth Calhoon, was, with all her elusive beauty, much too reminiscent of Helen Chandler's recent and mediocre work. She declaimed her lines and lacked variety of expression. All in all, The Home Towners, even with its langorous last act, is the best of the early season comedies.

Honest Liars

ROBERT WOOLSEY is the featured player in this alleged farce by Robert Weenolsen and Sherrel Webb, with an elaborate program credit to Frank Smithson, the director, "for aid in the revision of the manuscript." With so many co-operating cooks, not to mention George MacFarlane the producer, it is a little hard to know where to fix the blame for as stupid and inept an evening as one could well devise. If any reasonable vulgarities have been left out, you would have to search far to find them. If any possible elements of a good farce remain in the play, someone has buried them too deep for my vision. Even a farce can give some small illusion of momentary reality. Here there is none. Nor is there a single piece of good acting. All in all, this is about the most futile and worthless show I have seen. The most I can possibly say in its favor is that I have not seen all the shows that have been produced in the last three years.

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COMMUNICATIONS

BENEFITS AND BOLSHEVISM

Biddeford, Maine.

TO the Editor:—A student of far-eastern affairs, speaking recently at Williamstown, accuses the Soviet government of being more imperialisitc than ever was the Czar's imperial government.

Why not, when the diplomatic affairs of Russia are in the hands of George Chicherin, or under his guidance? One wonders a little at the lack of knowledge of the influence of individuals in the clash of forces which are creating a new epoch in Russia and which are really changing the face of Europe.

Chicherin is an able and disappointed professional diplomat of the imperial régime—an imperialist to the core. He is a man of patrician antecedents and cynical temperament. The bureaucratic ministry of Foreign Affairs cramped and soured him; no doubt he saw the passing of a régime which held him back with a minimum of regret. Probably he has seen in the Bolshevist propaganda an instrument to his hand such as he never could have hoped for in older days—an instrument to weaken Europe; and in Asia, to turn popular sentiment against Europeans. It is enough for the moment that Europeans should not, in Asia, be able to take advantage of Russia's weakness. His diplomacy is for Russia and for George Chicherin—not for any particular form of government.

One may imagine the joy in power such a man would feel, treating, unhampered, with the potentates of the world. Russia, to such a minister, would be the same old Russia it has been in all the ages—a vast extent of territory without natural boundaries, except in the North and East—merging insensibly in geographical conformation, as in the characteristics of her subjects, into Asia on the South. In the West, equally without natural boundaries, political frontiers were set, after devastating wars, by Poland, Germany, and Sweden. Russia was forced to grow East and South.

There is hardly a doubt that with the death of Lenin, the prophet, the Soviet system as a form of government entered upon a new era. Lenin had seen a vision. The other leaders were disciples or practical men fishing in troubled waters. It was inevitable that a factional struggle should break out, and now that it has gained more headway than seems to be generally realized in the United States, it would seem inevitable that the practical men shall win over the disciples bereft of their inspired chief.

The Third Internationale as now organized stands in the way of personal acquisition. Russians today, like the people of all the rest of the world, want comfort and wealth in security and peace. Russians will back the party which gives them the tangibles of life, and it may be that the issue will be joined openly sooner than most of our observers seem to expect.

We hear much in certain public addresses of the progress of Russia under the Soviet régime. One may venture to wonder if it is not, rather, the other side of the shield that people see—attributing to the benefits of Bolshevism those things which continue to exist or which have developed in spite of Bolshevism through the sheer urge of men to live and to acquire personal belongings in spite of all restraint.

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

INTERNATIONAL ILLUSION

Moline, Ill.

TO the Editor:—We in the West who get a glimpse at the New York papers now and then, are sometimes wondering in how far New York imagines that it is voicing or shaping the convictions of the people outside of Manhattan. An editorial in The Commonweal for August 11, International Illusion, is of a piece with the policy followed by the New York Times and New York World.

Underlying that policy is a tacit admission that we are still Shylocks after remitting France's war debt; that we are making enemies by our uncharitable, irritating attitude of insisting that France pay her post-war loans; that this unyielding attitude is inviting a coalition of European enemies against us.

Western convictions are fairly well crystalized on the subject of the French debt; it must be paid, as a matter of pure justice—a justice which has been long tempered by unavailing charity. If we had insisted more emphatically before, that France settle her accounts, we might have rendered that unhappy nation a real service and saved her from the bankruptcy she is now facing by saving her from the mad wars she fought after Versailles. This nation can certainly not be bound by what our "Pape laique" did in Versailles, in stubborn disregard of our laws and customs. It is a laudable ambition for a nation "to be a citizen of the world." But let us pursue that end with the clear understanding that international obligations are binding in justice—not "international illusions."

It is a well-nigh hopeless task to reclaim the spoiled child of a family. France acts the spoiled child among nations, whining and sobbing because she thinks herself dreadfully abused by everyone. We can have a good deal of respect and admiration for nations like England and Germany who have faced the facts soberly and set themselves to the task of meeting their obligations. It is almost hopeless to try and save a nation like France which cannot muster any virility. Mushy sentimentality carefully disguised under smooth phraseology, may appeal more to the soft eastern heart than to the hard-headed western mind.

REV. J. B. CULEMANS.

ON ENCOURAGING CRITICISM

Denton, Texas.

TO the Editor:—The Fortnightly Review, of August 15, has an item headed, The Catholic Press, in which Archbishop Dowling of St. Paul is quoted as saying:

"The worst evil of all that has come to us from the frequent and unreasonable agitations of our traditionally hostile critics, has been that we have dispensed ourselves from the imperative duty of criticizing ourselves sanely; for we have become thin-skinned and resentful of everything but meaningless praise."

Are these words exaggerated? Is there not too much laudation of our Catholic doings? Does not laudation lead to pride, which often causes ruin? Men who, at one time, were saints and apostles could not remain such under a load of flattery. We Catholics should encourage criticism. The human side of the Catholic Church is far from perfect. The Catholic press should be given perfect liberty in exposing faults in Church officials and doings.

REV. RAYMOND VERNIMONT.

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BOOKS

Jewish Influence on Christian Reform Movements, by Louis Israel Newman. New York: Columbia University Press. $7.50.

DR. NEWMAN'S work is one of the Columbia University Oriental Studies series, and needless to state, it is not "anti-Semitic." Written by a Hebrew, it merely proves afresh that one's viewpoint decides whether one will "point with pride" to the attainments of a party, or, if an outsider, "view with alarm" the machinations of the enemy. Dr. Newman's book tells the Jewish side of the story; and indeed, Dr. Newman is to be congratulated for his candor. He believes that the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn controversy about the burning of the Talmud was the actual beginning of the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation, in its turn, "contributed to the rise of the German Aufklaerung which in Germany produced a Lessing's Nathan, der Weise, and in France gave rise to the French Revolution and Jewish political emancipation." To sum up, the theme is the Jewish contribution to the revolt against a Catholic society—a contribution not negligible.

It has been assumed by H. C. Lea and other writers that the Inquisition was only too willing to act against Jews and heretics on the slenderest grounds. But Dr. Newman's investigations have shown that the Catholic anxiety was not unfounded. The author admits that the Catholic defense against Jews and heretics was quite justifiable. There was a concerted attempt to "bore from within" the Christian body. That the Jews joined with the heretics Dr. Newman repeatedly states. Jews encouraged the Cathari, although the theology of the latter was anti-Jewish. They diffused the writings of Martin Luther in Spain. They concealed heretics from the pursuivants. They supported the Ghibbeline, or anti-papal, party in Italy. There was a commercial alliance between Jews and the heretics, both parties practising the usury prohibited by the Church. Finally, there was carried on not only a hidden sapping of the Christian foundations but an active work of proselyting in many countries of Europe. Dr. Newman also admits that the Jews were not molested by the Inquisition save when they proselyted or conspired against the Christian state. What is remarkable is that the orthodox Jews themselves appealed, at one time, to the Inquisition against certain heterodox brethren.

The zeal manifested by the heretics for the diffusion of Bibles in the vernacular is, to our author, another indication of Jewish influence. Especially were the Waldenses pro-biblicist; they were, indeed, the "walking Bibles" of those days and were held in constant admiration on that account by the yokelry. They were strong for "the Bible and the Bible alone." They condemned the Church for withholding the sacred volume from the laity on account of the heretical footnotes, and harked back to the professed fountainhead of inspiration—the Masoretic text interpreted by the rabbis.

There was also a strong tendency among the heretics to reduce materially the margin of Old Testament prophecies which patently referred to the advent of Jesus Christ. In this course they followed the Jewish example. The Jews, after the fourth century, were found denying the Messianic application of Old-Testament prophecies which, they formerly had agreed, referred to the Messiah. Servetus was notable among his fellow Protestants on account of his reliance on the Jewish commentaries, and thus laid the foundation for the higher criticism of modern times. Dr. Newman agrees

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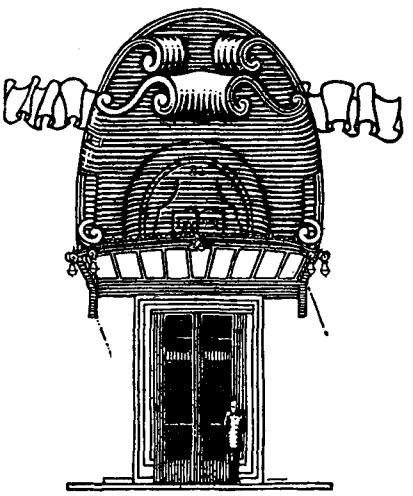

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that the influence of Judaism on Protestantism has directed the latter more and more into the paths of rationalism. Being just now engaged in preparing a book on that very subject, he sees the ultimate convergence of "modern Christianity" and "modern Judaism."

The Puritans, as the author points out, attempted to revive the Old Testament theocracy and carry over bodily into their political system the penal laws of Moses. They took up toward certain sins a stricter attitude than had commonly been assumed by Christendom. Their zeal against the cross, images, and pictures of the saints was frankly Judaic. In the modern manner of Robert G. Ingersoll and Sinclair Lewis, the iconoclasts challenged the Catholic God to protect the appurtenances of His system, promising that they would believe in Him if He struck them down by sudden judgment.

One of the most interesting phases of Jewish influence, however, is to be found in the apocalyptic obsession of the heretics. Protestant millenarianism is not new. Most of the heretics seem to have denied that the Church and the kingdom of heaven were identical. They postponed the advent of the latter to the future, and were always in expectation of impending cataclysms which would sweep away the apostate Romish Church and usher in the true kingdom of believers. Many heretics who professed Christianity, eagerly followed the false Messiahs who arose during the middle-ages. A precursor of James Alexander Dowie, a sort of original "Elijah III," appeared in Sicily; and, in the midst of such excitement, the peasants were persuaded by the Jews to practise the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath day. The Jews themselves saw in the Tartar invasion of Hungary the fulfilment of Ezechiel's prophecy concerning Gog and Magog.

Dr. Newman is to be sincerely thanked for giving us such a good portrayal of Michael Servetus, the anti-Trinitarian reformer who was brought to the stake by John Calvin. One is inclined to agree with him that the relation of Servetus to "modern thought" is a very important one. Servetus was strongly pro-Judaic. In his attempt to retain the old theological terminology while providing new substance, Servetus anticipated the handful of modernists led by Abbé Loisy three centuries before their day. Servetus also anticipated the so-called "Disciples of Christ," followers of Mr. Alexander Campbell, by his objection to Sunday as the Christian Sabbath and his teaching that the decalogue has been wholly abrogated.

ROBERT R. HULL.

The Rise and Fall of Jesse James, by Robertus Love. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. $5.00.

WE have enough experience with bandits in our own humdrum time to appreciate fully the manoeuvres of a gentleman adventurer like Jesse James. Nobody on the blotter endangers his record and—speaking in an off-hand fashion—nobody rivals the picturesque originality of his methods. Mr. Love, who is frankly a newspaper man and not a literary person, has ransacked memoranda bearing on the Jameses with a genuine affection. No poetic fancy or "paper-backed" color here, if you please, where there is an author who respects the best traditions of scientific research and goes over the ground with a very sceptical comb. Mr. Love positively refuses to give Jesse James credit for anything he didn't do, and so skilfully punctures the assertions of previous historians that he sometimes appears to be robbing his hero of well-earned glory. Yet enough remains to satisfy the most exacting taste.

Why should anybody care to read about Jesse James to begin with? One most suppose that the reasons are introduced by the rather ancient one to the effect that there is nohing like a bandit for making an afternoon's reading enjoyable. But there are several others—Jesse James as a psychological study, as an illustration of a phase in American history, as a sample of what guerilla warfare will accomplish with reference to an impressionable young man. Mr. Love utilizes all these motives and the reader may take his choice. They were a queer lot, those squatters on Missouri soil just before the era of civil strife. For the most part sober and even intelligent citizens, they were aroused to the peak of fury by the turn of events. A mere contemporary chieftain like Abd-el-Krim is an exemplar of the milk of human tenderness compared with bloody cut-throats like Quantrill, who supported the Confederate cause for the mere pleasure of firing his pistol at human targets with statistical success. As a soldier in this guerilla command, Jesse James learned the art of marksmanship; as a citizen he seems to have been prevented from practising any other art by the prejudices which appeared in the aftermath of war.

However that may be, even philosophic persons can profit by a reading of what Mr. Love has to say. Dean Inge, not long ago, informed us that there are substrata of barbarism latent in civilization. The Dean was probably not thinking of the James history as substantiating evidence, but the thought that the naturally gentle and lovable son of religious, industrious, native American parents became one of the most desperate desperados on record might make us perform a bit of efficacious thinking. Mr. Love suggests the point, but like a good narrator goes ahead with his story and pauses only to remind possible bad boys that the road to bandit glory is paved with spikes. The book is an addition to minor American biography and will, no doubt, find and keep its place on the shelves to which readers turn hopefully and not in vain.

GEORGE N. SHUSTER.

A History of England, from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth, by Edward P. Cheyney. Volume II. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $6.50.

ALBERT GUÉRARD has said: "The best historians are those who note the reactions of sensitive souls amid the record of human hopes and follies." In Professor Cheyney's imposing two-volume study of the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the historical narrative is based on an exact and exhaustive documentation which allows hundreds of actual Elzabethan voices to record reactions as different as those who experienced them; yet which are limned in a splendid canvas whose events and personalities are presented with the detail of which nearly six hundred pages of text permit.

In this second volume of Professor Cheyney's work, the lesser-known tragedy of the second Spanish Armada, the Armada of 1596; the stirring tale of the capture of Calais; the fall of the Earl of Essex; Elizabeth's own death, and that great funeral processional which seemed to carry to the tomb the splendor and romance of an epoch together with the woman who gave it her name, are the more picturesque and movemented portions. At the same time, those parts dealing with the Last Four Parliaments of Queen Elizabeth and Local Government, supply a far more careful and reliable background of actual Elizabethan village and community life and governmental polity than does the dogmatic Froude in his

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Reign of Queen Elizabeth. Froude (he said as much himself) approached Elizabeth—especially where her dealings with the unfortunate Mary Stuart are concerned—as a novelist does his heroine, rather than a historian his subject.

Freedom from bias, the genuine scholar's impersonality, distinguish Professor Cheyney's work. He remembers what Froude at times forgets—that the Irishmen and Spaniards of Elizabeth's day were human beings, that they had legitimate hopes, aspirations, and ideals, as well as the Queen they opposed. Nothing could be more illuminating in its clear, documented exposition, for example, than the chapter, Essex in Ireland.

Professor Cheyney's history is one which appeals essentially to the intelligent reader. From a vast Elizabethan bibliography he has drawn the authentic data he presents in lucid, flowing style. But he does not draw the reader's conclusions for him—he is content to offer him an admirable opportunity to do so for himself. He recreates "the parish" of Elizabeth's time as vividly as he evokes the dramatic moments of Essex's execution or, quoting John Chamberlain's letters, he recalls how—as in New York today—in Oxford, in 1603 (at commencement) "cutpurses are so numerous that many of the visitors lost money, jewels, scarfs and gloves; and one thief showed his skill by stealing a lady's slipper from her foot."

Froude extenuates the Queen's extremes against those who clung to the faith of their fathers. Professor Cheyney does not palliate them; and instances the cruel putting to death of the Catholic priest, Richardson—hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, in 1602, who "showed such mildness and dignity that general compassion was expressed for him . . . and it is remarked even by our own good Protestant letter-writer that 'such spectacles do nothing to increase the Gospel.'" In every way, Professor Cheyney's book represents an achievement; an achievement of human as well as scholarly interest, and a convincing recreation of a great epoch.

FREDERICK H. MARTENS.

The Connoisseur, by Walter De La Mare. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Triumph, by John Wiley. New York: Minton Balch and Company. $2.00.

Flapper Anne, by Cora Harris. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.00.

A VOLUME by Walter De La Mare is significant to the world that reads; that reads, at least, for the beauty of the telling rather than the action of the tale. If these new stories in The Connoisseur fall short in some degree of the accepted excellence of that classic, The Memoirs of a Midget, and of the immemorial romance of Henry Brocken, there is left the haunting appeal, the atmospheric tension by which, in language fitly chosen, Mr. De La Mare secures his effects. His characters may seem but shadowy creatures moving about in the moated grange of their existence. They will not survive in memory, but the medium will live on; a prose that is poetry, delicate, wistful in its imagery; a phraseology, inclined to the precious, but drenched in sudden, colorful charm. In almost every story there is an eerie background of mist—of old, sepulchral houses on gaunt sea-coasts—of men and battlements, hoary with antiquity. And behind them all is an underlying sense of the supernatural. It is a horror, however, that never strikes. A Meredithian phrase may be used of

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Mr. De La Mare, that he "sheds meanings." There is no clear-cut vision, but the shadowy, almost indistinguishable picture that he draws is none the less beautiful. Perhaps this book, like dreams, was made for rainy days.

For all its honesty of purpose, its hints of real promise, Triumph, by John Wiley, is dull reading. Contrast, to be effective, must be subtly suggested. In this touch, Mr. Wiley signally fails. The story is of the simplest, the most obvious variety. Nancy Hoyt, fair-haired daughter of a Congregational minister in staid Bradford, marries (after a qualm or two, alleged to be emotional) one Jeffery Kildare of New York and endeavors to take up life among the reckless fringe that supposedly inhabits that rocky island. Everything runs amuck on Manhattan. The reader bears this with a degree of equanimity, for although Nancy may be the fairest flower of ecstatic Puritanism, she sometimes seems positively "non compos."

Flapper Anne is an honest endeavor to draw one of the so-called "Amazons of Freedom," for whatever she may or may not stand. Given a southern village as a background for the outrageous antics and vocabulary of Anne, the contrast becomes obvious. The plot, unfortunately, is obvious too, with its hackneyed hero, the rude, yet inevitably strong, silent young doctor. There is too much pulling on the strings with Anne. She is by no means the exotic figure that Mrs. Harris intends, but is quite an ordinary one. Granted that a flapper may upset a village, and "be ready at all times for all emergencies," it is doubtful whether she is worth all the printers' ink and pulpit rhetoric that is heaped upon her. The adage, "youth will be served," was not coined for this generation. What does stand out for enduring charm is the picture of the southern city and its changing small-town society.

MARTHA BAYARD.

Studies of English Poets, by J. W. Mackail. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $3.75.

THE late professor of poetry at Oxford has been recently sowing his seeds in many an alien garden. He has lectured in Sydney and Adelaide as well as in Birmingham and London, always on his favorite topic, and he gathers these lectures together in his latest book. They are fine examples of a not too formal discourse, on ten English poets, from Shakespeare to Swinburne.

Mr. Mackail's object has been twofold—"to disengage the living and effective poetical value of the work of selected English poets; and secondly, to bring that work into its place in the organic evolution of English poetry." He has a singular power of dealing with well-known facts in a light that makes them new, and of handling minor and half-forgotten classics in a way that revives in one's mind the excitement we know they caused on their first appearance.

Young of the Night Thoughts and Thomson of The Seasons are burnished in his hands till they shine, one feels, with all their original lustre. Sir Richard Fanshawe, translator of the Lusiads, becomes an important figure of the age of Milton. And the lectures on Shakespeare, Pope, Morris, Tennyson, and Swinburne are bold and happy discussions of major themes. Stately in treatment, they are marked less by any special insight than a general humane sympathy. They were written to be heard, not studied—but the inner ear of the reader will find them thoroughly rewarding.

VAN WYCK BROOKS.

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THE QUIET CORNER

I counsel thee, shut not thy heart nor thy library.—C. LAMB.

"Cyril B. Egan," announced Dr. Angelicus to the library coterie, "is a young man of vision. Here is a paper of his which all of you would-be playwrights and amateur actors should not only follow with the closest attention, but would do well to profit by." Forthwith, the Doctor began to read:

"Disappearance of the Dramatic Art. (Being excerpts from a lecture delivered by Professor Stockyard, Sandburg College, Chicago, Illinois, January 15, 1955.)

" 'And now,' said the spry old professor, 'really to answer the question: Why isn't the drama? In 1926, the theatrical directory of the United States listed 15,962 theatres, five hippodromes, 3,000,093 nickelodeons, and 1,000 penny arcades. Today, there is no theatrical directory. Why? Because there are no theatricals. Wherefore? Herefore'—

"The old professor moved snappily to the blackboard, and taking up a piece of chalk, proceeded to wield it with dexterity, outlining a crescent enclosing several specks.

" 'This measled slice of circle, friend-pupils, represents the stage as it was in its heyday. The measles denote the actors. Each actor—or measle—you will notice, is properly quarantined behind the foots. Which is where an actor belongs—if he belongs at all. That's where you found him in 1910.'

"The professor drew a straight line downward from the centre of the crescent, dotting it with specks.

" 'But after 1910 or thereabout,' he continued, 'there's a change—in everything. The measles go gallivanting from the sick-room; polar bears start living in California; poets begin to work in prose; and the actors step off the stage and into the audience to strut their stuff. The crescent I have drawn is still the stage; but you will note that the measles have broken out and are seductively tripping down the runway (the straight line) into the audience.

" 'That movement, though, wasn't so bad. In fact, the principle of it was first-rate. So long as the players began from the stage, the chances were that they would get back to the stage sometime before the curtain fell; and usually they didn't stray out of bounds long enough to spread their exhibitionistic itch. It was only when some disoriented dramaniac conceived the mad notion of starting the show from a box or orchestra chair, that the contagion began to spread. There was, for instance, the case of the ushers, who first broke out in a rash of costume and make-up to circulate colorfully through the orchestral arteries in the guise of señoritas, or colleens, or old Elizabethans. And then, with increase in confidence, these post-graduate seat-slammers would ever and anon sing out some thumping ditty from the current performance while they went about their appointed tasks. And finally they set up a clamor for speaking-parts.

" 'Actor into audience! Usher into actor! What should be more reasonable than that the playgoer himself should take a wear of the sock and a stride in the buskin? If the play was to be flung at his head, why shouldn't he take a fling at the play? Peter Pan began it with his: 'Do you believe in fairies?', holding up the action of the drama until the whole theatre yelled 'yes.' But not till some time afterward did the device of making the audience work for its money, develop its fullest swing.'

"Professor Stockyard stepped away from the board, and heaved a deep grunt, premonitory of reminiscence.

" 'I think,' said he, absentmindedly sketching profiles with

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his chalk on the head of the nearest student, 'that I am the last man to have attended a show—in a manner of speaking, the greatest show on earth. The name of the piece was Life—a pageant and improvisation of madness. It was the drama's last and most violent stand. Life was impressionistic, jazzy—insane, as the program expressed it, 'like life itself.' It was.

" 'Picture, if you can, a drama that began with the curtain descending on a crowded stage. But after it reached the floor, what did it do but drop still further to disappear beneath the floor! And so the stage was again revealed with a rash of actors on it. These blathered about and barnstormed a bit; then bolted to the rear orchestra, where, regardless of the direction of the sittees, they continued to strut their all-star hour. Then someone popped out of a top box and sang a song; the scene-shifters did a song and dance. In the middle of the theatre a trap-door opened, and under the light of a crimson spot, the furnace-hands dramatized themselves with all the gusto of amateurs making capital of their first opportunity. Naturally, the audience judged themselves far better actors than these—and so my family doctor, two rows in back of me, shot up from his seat, and put on a wig. There was a justice of the peace who sang Sweet Adeline; and then a large section of the audience rushed on deck to stage a mob scene, while the original actors played at being audience.

" 'Nervous, my boys, is no name for the situation! One felt as though the theatre were mined with fire-crackers; and one never knew where next the contagious flame would ignite. I alone, more proof against the torch of Corse Payton than the North Pole enwrapped in an asbestos shroud, stood cold and firm. Nothing could melt my strength of character; nothing could shake my stout determination never to be an actor. At length, however, in fear that even asbestos might reach its melting point, I chose the nearest exit; and shortly afterward, the theatre, with everyone in it, burned to the ground. Spontaneous combustion, the coroner said.

" 'It was directly following that,' concluded Professor Stockyard, as he assumed a louder and more dignified tone for the edification of the dean whom he espied peeking through the transom, 'that Congress, acting in the interest of the nerves and general health of the community, passed the Anti-Theatre law. Thereby all theatrical performances were forbidden, except behind barred or wired stages, whence the actors might not spring out at the audience, and whither the audience might not break in upon the actors. But the mummers, in their vanity resenting the idea of being exhibited like so many wild animals, refused to take advantage of this gracious exception—as a result of which we are utterly lacking—or to speak with exactness, happily free of—the drama today!' "

—THE LIBRARIAN.

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